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RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

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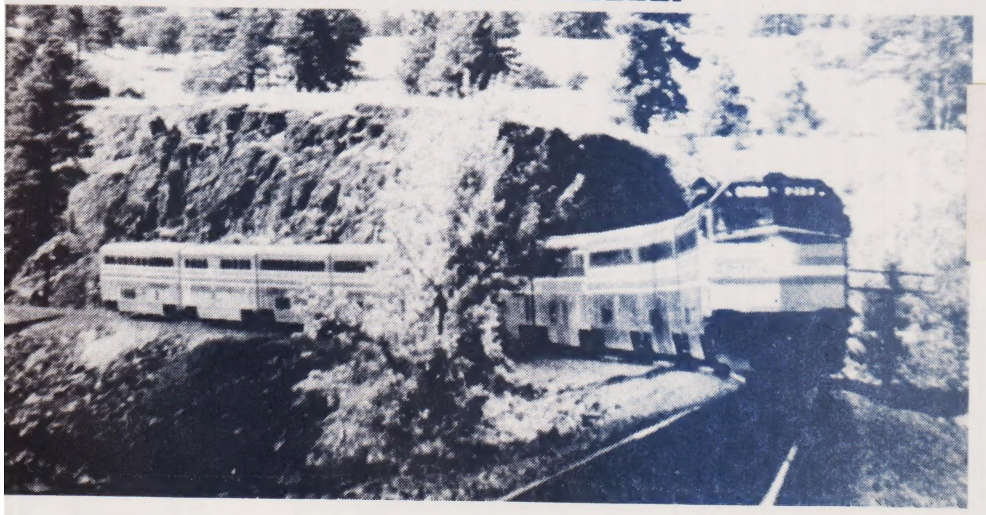

LETTERS

I wish to emphatically correct the statement on page 6 of RTN 276 which states that "CIRPS, along with Transport 2000, has presented to officials a plan to restore the ATLANTIC LIMITED *while removing the OCEAN."*

This point is a very sensitive one in New Brunswick and one which Transport 2000 Atlantic has taken great pains to ensure: *the OCEAN will continue to operate,* altho it will be combined with the CHALEUR from Matapedia to Montreal and with the ATLANTIC from Moncton to Halifax. Already many people on the route of the OCEAN think that we are trading off their train for the ATLANTIC. We are trying to inform them this is not so, but everyone involved with the rail passenger system in Canada is very sensitive and suspicious about potential loss of service.

The remarkable thing about our proposal which makes it a hard one to negate is the very fact that service can be added while the cost remains the same or lower. The two basic reasons are:

1. Added traffic potential from Saint John, Fredericton, and Sherbrooke.
2. The route via Saint John and Sherbrooke (the ATLANTIC), is 88 miles shorter than that of the OCEAN, so car miles are reduced.

Please inform your readers that both the OCEAN and ATLANTIC will remain full-service trains under our proposals, and the CHALEUR will operate on an improved time-of-day schedule. Further details are available from:

Transport 2000 Atlantic, 40 Lorne Avenue, Dartmouth, N.S. Canada B2Y 3E7.

John Pearce, President
Transport 2000 Atlantic
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Being both an Amtrak-appointed travel agent and a station agent for Scenic Hawkeye Stages, a local intercity carrier, I would like to express my opinion as to the removal of station agents at Amtrak points.

Any business that intends to stay in business must serve the public and make a profit. Amtrak has been saddled with inadequate funding to do the job it must do, and the bureaucrats have been trying to kill it since its inception. Removing the station agents appears to save dollars but it in effect may have the effect of making Amtrak's job harder to do. Working on commission, as I do in both areas, still has not lessened my desire to serve the traveling public to the best of my ability. The traveling public, I believe, still likes the personal touch and sometimes, as has been my experience, needs to have someone available to give them aid and information when they arrive in our city. Altho it means waiting 45 minutes longer every working day and coming down twice on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays for at least 30 minutes each time, the satisfaction of serving the public is payment above and beyond the monetary commissions. It bothers me that each type of agent is carping at the other when each can serve a vital role in surface travel.

Would Amtrak offer their vacant space (assuming the station agents are abolished) to travel agents for a nominal fee in return for them assuming the duties of the station agent which make train travel a pleasure rather than a chore (baggage checking and placement on trains, information, etc.)?

If those of us interested in promoting Amtrak and surface transportation don't start working together soon, air will be the only way to travel, and that only for the rich. As this administration has said, "Nobody rides the trains." I, for one, am honored to be classed as a "nobody" because I do ride the train.

Gerald L. Matheny
Cresco, Iowa

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ON THE COVER

The last southbound SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA, Amtrak train 15, on October 1, approaches the Santa Susana tunnel in the Simi Hills of Southern California, which will take it into the San Fernando Valley on the last leg of its final trip. The weather is appropriately gloomy. The train is led by engine 283, pulling a baggage car, 3 Heritage sleepers, Amlounge and 2 Amcoaches. Photo by Paul Rayton.

(Rear cover:) This photo (the original is in color) runs across the front and rear covers of Amtrak's 1982 Annual Report, reviewed in these pages recently. The photo is not identified, but strongly resembles the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR running in the Sierra.

We neglected to note last issue that the drawing of the Superliner lounge car on the rear cover came from the recent Caltrans passenger train schedule.

I would like to clarify a statement that appeared (in a letter) in RTN 277 concerning a bad experience a friend of mine had on the CRESCENT.

The statement should have been in quotes, since the criticism was voiced by him and was submitted under my name by accident.

My experiences on the CRESCENT were excellent. The dining crew, steward and supervisor Frank Duffy ran the operations like true professionals.

The food was excellent, all dinner calls were made on time, there were smiles and one was made to feel at home.

Hugh Jones, Chairman
Citizens for Improvement of Commuter Rail
Boston, Massachusetts

Thanks for your report on the West Side Connection project in New York (RTN 274). I hope that New York rail travel supporters are eyeing Amtrak's plans carefully. One consequence of the transfer of Empire Service trains to Penn Station is the end of all long-distance service at New York's elegant Grand Central Terminal. On the other hand, the proposed West Side Connection does provide very convenient transfer or thru train possibilities, linking the important Northeast and Empire corridors. For example, passengers from Washington DC bound for Albany or Buffalo will be able to avoid the cross-town transfer from Penn Station to GCT. Of course, money is also involved, since Amtrak now pays rent to New York's MTA for use of GCT.

I agree with NY DOT that Amtrak should develop a permanent solution to the question of locomotive changes in New York. Power changes are time-consuming and expensive. Empire Service trains using GCT now operate on third-rail current east of Croton-Harmon; this includes Turboliners and Amfleet trains pulled by FL-9 locomotives. Rather than ventilating the new tunnel and areas of Penn Station, as DOT suggested, why doesn't Amtrak consider installation of third rail in the new tunnel? Many Penn Station tracks are already so equipped. Amtrak trains could shut off their turbines or diesel engines before entering the tunnel leading to the station.

I suspect, tho, that Amtrak's hidden plan is to relieve itself of its dependence on the aging FL-9s, use as many of the newer F40s as possible for Empire Service, and probably run the Turboliners directly into Penn Station as is, even tho they are equipped with pickup shoes for third rail operation. In the mid-1970s, the short-lived UA turbos handled one or two daily Boston-New York runs. They entered Penn Station from Queens via the East River tunnels with their noisy turbines blasting out exhaust fumes.

Vincent Mazzola
New York, New York

RAIL CANADA

TRANSPORT 2000 CANADA held its Board meeting Oct 8 and 9 in Ottawa, and it was well-attended by delegates from as far away as Vancouver and Halifax. President Guy Chartrand reported on a very active year, including an exchange trip to France. He expects more positive action on bi-level cars for transcontinental service; he says otherwise age will end at least the Western service. The loss of baggage service on a number of trains is a bad sign, for example on the Montreal-Toronto CAVALIER. John Pearce, President of T-2000 Atlantic, reports that the Transport Ministry now sees express buses taking over the role earlier promised to LRCs. While the public is not exactly rushing to ride the Ministry's variously subsidized substitutes, LRCs, once promised, will now be withheld with the excuse that maintenance facilities would cost too much. "Bustitution" is made easier by the division of the Atlantic provinces into four jurisdictions and their ensuing weakness.

FORMER TRANSPORT MINISTER Jean-Luc Pepin, before leaving his post, ordered VIA to study the feasibility of sharing the cost of restoring the PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL. (Vancouver has an Exposition in 1986.)

THE ARGENTIA TRAIN in Newfoundland seems doomed, as its ferry connection was deliberately severed, by running the train and ferry on alternate days. The CTC will probably permit most branch line mixed trains to be abandoned in 1984.

ATLANTIC LIMITED RESTORAL continues to be pushed, especially by a lively coalition centered on St. John, N.B. Some additional costs may be expected with Customs and Immigration expecting to be paid for setting up a "new" service.

B.C. GOVERNMENT'S fiscal restraint program is cutting into transit, reports Jim Larsen of T-2000, B.C. However, it doesn't seem to cut into the expensive ALRT mega-project—cost has gone from $700 million to $800 million and is rising. Pacific Coach Lines will be "privatised."

Dining on VIA, as pictured in a recent VIA brochure, "Introducing Comfort."

ESQUIMALT & NANAIMO route is once again up for abandonment proceedings before the CTC. For Oct 3-7 hearings, John Cooper mobilized opposition to abandonment and hired an architect to design an intermodal terminal at Victoria to display. It came out at the hearings that British Columbia Railway, for a comparable subsidy ($1 million/year), operates twice the train miles with three times the equipment as VIA does on the E&N.

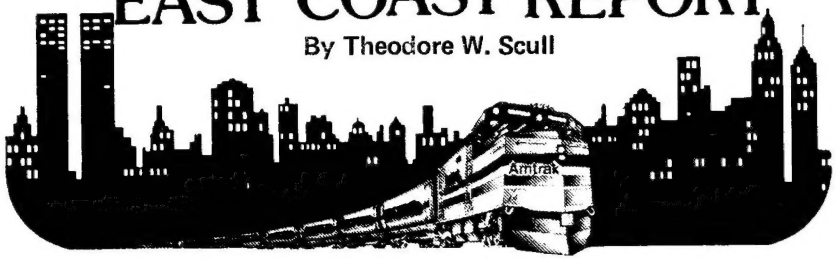
CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAY is trying to eliminate stations on the line of the former SUPER CONTINENTAL in British Columbia. Ft. Langley station will be given away, Matsqui demolished, and Chilliwack is the subject of an appeal to Transport Minister Lloyd Axworthy.

NEW TRANSPORT MINISTER Lloyd Axworthy comes from Atwood on the Winnipeg-Melville line, and has cousins in Melville. As a result of his awareness, and T-2000 Saskatchewan President Don Able's action, Axworthy has given directions to VIA to restore the SUPER CONTINENTAL from Winnipeg to Edmton via Melville by April 1984 at the latest (tho it could be done on 30 days' notice). VIA has been checking out stations, and "everything is falling into place." Lorne Nystrom, M.P., is asking for a 5-year service guarantee. Don Able, as Mayor of Melville, will "see to it that the train is used."

(continued on page 8)

EAST COAST REPORT

By Theodore W. Scull



Schedule and service changes dominate the news as we put the clocks back one hour at the end of October. Amtrak's New York State service presents a mixed picture of improvements and questionable shifts in train times.

The best news has to be the reinstatement of a weekday early morning departure from New York to Albany-Rensselaer. The new train, the BEAR MOUNTAIN, leaves Grand Central at 7:30am, arriving Albany at 9:44am on a fast schedule of 2hrs, 14 mins, giving 1½ more hours during the working day in the state capital. In order to allow this change, one New York-Albany train is dropped between 8:45am and 3:34pm, and the remaining two schedules are advanced for a better spread.

The ADIRONDACK moves from morning to afternoon departures from both New York and Montreal to tap the winter ski business in upper New York State. The losers are weekend tourists visiting these two cities who now arrive in time for bed, effectively wiping out the 3-plus hours that allowed for a first evening on the town. The end-points schedule is slightly speeded up, with five little-used stations bypassed.

Because the ADIRONDACK'S shift takes up the last evening slot from Schenectady and Albany to New York, the NIAGARA RAINBOW's Niagara Falls departure is advanced from 2pm to 10am. Now the last departure of the day from Niagara Falls is at 11:50am, most definitely a setback for passengers between there and Amsterdam wishing the latest possible return to New York. Business is already poor from Syracuse west because of the devastating effect of People Express, and now it can only worsen.

The MONTREALER is speeded up between Washington and New York by 50mins, and now arrives in Montreal 30mins earlier at 9:35am, when it is on time. Southbound the train leaves Montreal ½-hour earlier at 7:10pm, arriving Washington 24mins earlier, with nine minutes cut from the New York-Washington schedule.

Philadelphia-Harrisburg service in both directions loses a train with the remaining trains shifted to close the gap. The 3:55pm express train (two stops versus as many as 11) from Philadelphia is moved to a more sensible end-of-the-working-day departure at 4:55pm.

With the PENNSYLVANIAN finally becoming a thru New York-Pittsburgh train, the New York departure is advanced one hour to 7:30am, but 19mins are added to the New York-Harrisburg time because the train now fills an all-stops "Clocker" slot. However, eastbound between Harrisburg and New York the schedule is 13mins faster as the previous 44-min connecting train time at 30th St. is reduced to 16mins dwell time.

The four New England Metroliners add New London to their New York-Boston runs, hopefully to improve lagging business, and have extended their runs from nine to 14mins.

Washington-Boston trains are speeded up, with six trains having from 15-27mins taken out of their schedules. Many other trains show changes in elapsed times, with more cuts than schedule lengthenings.

The BANKERS from Washington to Springfield now leaves at 1:30pm instead of 2:30pm, giving an earlier 5:16pm departure from New York (instead of 6pm). The 5pm Metroliner Express from Washington thru New York to New Haven is advanced two hours to 3pm, better serving end-of-the-business-day travelers at Wilmington and

Philadelphia, and now arrives at Connecticut stations two hours earlier, before instead of after the dinner hour. The New Haven arrival is 7:35pm instead of 9:40pm.

★★★

The Long Island Rail Road has made numerous adjustments to reduce the number of standees and to alleviate congestion during the rush hours at Jamaica where many commuters have to change trains. On the Oyster Bay Branch, a new shuttle operation is in effect that has passengers transfering at Mineola instead of Jamaica during most off-peak hours and for two rush-hour schedules. In effect, passengers will spend more time on electric trains than before, tho the travel time is about the same.

The Eastern Long Island timetable Form 11 now becomes the Montauk Branch (South Fork) Form 11 with the Greenport (North Fork) service being included in the Ronkonkoma Branch Form 3. The expensive (according to the LIRR) bus service from Babylon that replaced trains on certain North Fork schedules in the past has now been completely eliminated. Hurrah.

The best news of all comes from the Hoboken–Port Jervis line (87.2 miles), jointly run by NJ Transit and Metro-North. Instead of two morning weekday trains originating at Port Jervis and two more originating at Middletown for Hoboken, there are now five trains, all originating in Port Jervis, with one–the last of the morning–requiring a transfer at Suffern, where MTA territory ends and NJT begins. Beyond the rush hour, the service is expanded to four trains, two originating in Harriman and two more in Port Jervis, all requiring a change of train in Suffern. It is now possible to arrange a variety of flexible same-day trips outward from Hoboken, and for the first time in a number of years, to make one-day roundtrips to Port Jervis.

The Saturday schedule which saw a single train in from Port Jervis in the morning and out again in the afternoon now sees two morning, one afternoon and one evening inbound and one morning and two evening trains outbound. There is still no Sunday service. The schedule improvements also include new stations, with more ample parking, at Campbell Hall and Cornwall in New York State, in an area of growing population.

Metro-North will order 19 new coaches for its Upper Harlem Line rather than rebuild a similar number of 30-year old units. While the new plan is more expensive, the new cars will each have 10 more seats and are expected to last 35 years instead of only 15 for the rebuilt cars. In addition, 42, instead of only 20, 1100-series ex-New York Central MUs, completed between 1962 and 1965, will be rebuilt by Morrison-Knudsen for use on the Harlem and Hudson lines. Thanks to Walter Zullig for most of the LIRR and Metro-North news.

★★★

A nasty series of anti-Amtrak letters appeared in the *New York Times* Sunday Travel Section, first prompted by a letter that had no reference to any recently-published travel article. The *Times* printed a letter from a Florida-bound passenger who didn't like his trip or his accommodations. Amtrak President Graham Claytor then had his letter of apology printed in which he added that Amtrak has received in the last year a (statistically) significant drop in complaints. Two more letter writers were allowed to respond with conjectures that perhaps the drop could be explained away by many passengers now considering it a waste of time to complain. The paper of record has resorted to sniper tactics again.

★★★

A recent trip from Manhattan out to Bernardsville NJ to visit RTN reader Homer Hill involved five different interconnecting trains each way. Outbound, I caught the rush-hour Lexington Avenue IRT Local and N BMT Local to 33rd Street and 6th Avenue, then switched onto the counter-rush-hour PATH service to Hoboken Terminal. The 9:30am Morristown Line diesel-hauled local took me to Summit for an across-the-platform change (one minute) to an ancient (1925-1930) 4-car MU set thru suburban, rural and rainy New Jersey countryside to Bernardsville, perfect connections and on time all the way.

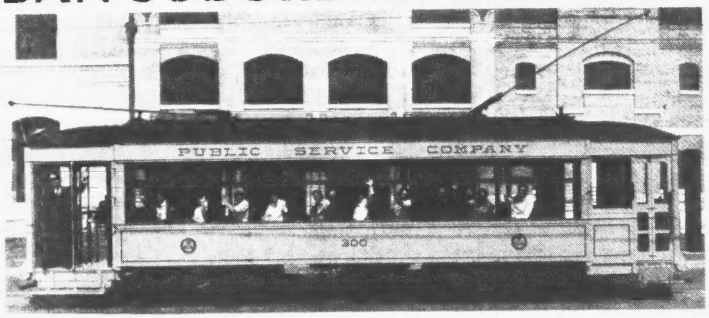
The afternoon return worked the same way in reverse until I boarded the N train at 33rd Street. Two and a half inches of rain had knocked out RR service in Queens,

backing up N and RR service in Manhattan. Water cascaded into the tunnels as the N train crept along taking 45mins to make the 10-min run to 59th Street. With Manhattan-bound passengers from Queens being forced onto the No. 7 Flushing Line, the uptown No. 6 Lexington Local was overcrowded and much delayed below 59th Street. My dinner guests were waiting, with patience and understanding, in the lobby of my building on return. Probably few readers west of the Delaware will understand this obstacle course without resorting to three different sets of transit maps.

Perfect rides don't make for interesting reading, but they do please the patrons. A very full, at least from New York to Philadelphia, 4:30pm Saturday CARDINAL arrived five minutes early at the city of the losing team in the Amtrak Series, and the Sunday evening return "Clocker" at 7:01pm with six full 76-seat Heritage Fleet coaches, arrived back in New York also five minutes early. The blackout period ends on the Corridor at 7pm on Fridays and Sundays.

One important observation made after 30-plus years of experience riding the Corridor: In the past, hordes of people used to board at North Philadelphia station for New York, and on this Sunday evening, one of the heaviest train departures of the week, saw roughly one dozen passengers join train 222. North Philadelphia is a dead depot in a highly dangerous part of the city. Perhaps it should be closed as an Amtrak station, if neighborhood politics will allow. I for one would certainly never recommend anyone using it even during daylight hours.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT



SAN ANTONIO OFFERED free streetcar rides on Sunday, Oct 9 from 10am to 5pm, on the first anniversary of the return to service of "Texas' only authentic operating electric streetcar. The vehicle (photo above from flyer) was operating by San Antonio Museum Association's Museum of Transportation thru funding from Pearl Brewery. Free rides were between the Museum of Art and the Pearl Brewery.

SEPTA GAVE BRITISH Columbia Railway a "sweetheart deal', critics note, when it allowed the railway three RDC cars on a 10-year lease for one dollar per year, with an option to buy them for scrap value at the end of the period. Critics wonder whether SEPTA did so in order to avoid pressure to reinstate some service.

MONTREAL IS PLANNING a new light rail line across the southeast part of the city, as well as two new Metro lines–a north-south and an east-west line.

THE "OLYMPIC EXPRESS", proposed to run between the two Olympic Games sites in Los Angeles next summer, would cost $6.8 million to implement–more than the initial estimates of $2.2 million. The Olympic Organizing Committee has told the train's backers that they must seek private funding, and this they reportedly are successfully doing. They hope to have it by mid-November, and the sooner the better in order to complete needed track work in preparation for the runs.

LOS ANGELES' EASTSIDE is concerned that it will have no representation in the planned new Metro system or the Long Beach trolley. It had proposed an extension of each of these new lines to serve the east side of L.A., but as no funding is available for them, it now suggests upgrading bus service in the area to make it a model bus system when the other transit systems come on line.

LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD for the first time ever is offering special package tickets to all New York Knick home games at Madison Square Garden for the 1983-84 season (Oct 29–Mar 14).

UMTA will get a new administrator. President Reagan has named Ralph L. Stanley now chief of staff to DOT Secretary Dole, and former White House Aide, to head the mass transit agency. He joined DOT in 1981. Before that, he was in private law practice, and actively campaigned for Reagan in 1980.

BART HAS APPROVED the routing of a new 7.6-mile extension from the Richmond station. The route, chosen from 15 alternatives, will include stations at Contra Costa College in San Pablo, Hilltop Mall in Richmond, Appian Way in Pinole, and at the interchange of I-80 and state route 4 in Hercules. Extensions to the Concord, Fremont and San Francisco lines must be built before the Richmond line extension.

NEW YORK TIMES editorialized on Oct 22 about the challenges facing new MTA head Robert Kiley. Most important of these, the paper noted, are long-range planning questions—such as whether the city's population will grow or decrease, whether riders lost to private conveyances can be lured back, and whether "redundant and underused" services could be dropped without problems.

DOMED SPORTS STADIUM proposed for San Francisco, to supersede Candlestick Park, would be located very close to the present SP/Caltrans depot. Parking would be very limited, and planners seem to be relying on proposed extensions of the SP line to the Transbay Terminal and/or a Muni Metro extension from Embarcadero station to the stadium to handle movement of many patrons. Stadium planning may give an impetus to these needed transit extensions.

PONTIAC COMMUTER TRAINS made their last runs Oct 17 after a judge lifted a restraining order that Michigan ARP had obtained. To help MARP appeal to state supreme court, send contributions to: MARP,5062 Mansfield #33,Royal Oak MI48073.

NEW JERSEY TRANSIT will drop commuter rail service between High Bridge and Phillipsburg NJ in mid-December.

RAIL CANADA (continued from page 4)

PRINCE GEORGE LINK has not been publicized by VIA, so British Columbia Rwy has withdrawn the 20 reserved seats for the rail route.

THE RAILBUS PROPOSAL for the Churchill line in Manitoba seems to be going ahead, and likewise for the proposal in Northwestern Ontario.

ANOTHER CTC HEARING has been requested by VIA for the Hearst-Nakina service, to look at a railbus proposal. CN wants to substitute a more expensive conventional train for the Sioux Lookout-Thunder Bay mixed train. On the Hearst-Nakina line it seems obvious that CN has gone to considerable trouble to get traffic off this, the "third transcontinental" line, and local opposition to abandonment has been vociferous.

TRANSPORT 2000 ONTARIO, represented by George Bechtel, has been preparing to intervene in the Toronto downtown railwaylands proposal, in Nov. hearings in Toronto. The city's ideas for this development do not make much transportation sense, say analysts, and would force the coach yard to be moved to Mimico.

THE OTTAWA DIVISION of T-2000 has been working at getting service restored on the Mt. Laurier-Montreal and Ottawa/Hull-Lachute-Montreal runs. T-2000's concern that VIA's upgrading of Smiths Falls-Brockville CP line will preclude improvement of more direct line to Napanee was shared. The latter would be preferable for night and non-stop trains.

RETURN TO PALAIS Station in Quebec is on the books, and work will start in January on the project. Voyageur bus line still does not want in.

TORONTO-BOUND VIA train with 250 passengers struck a farm tractor stolen and parked across the tracks near Orillia early on Oct 15. The train was delayed 3 hours and $15,000 damage to the locomotive was estimated. No injuries reported.

MACLEAN'S MAGAZINE published an article on "VIA Rail's new push" in its Oct 17 issue, discussing Axworthy's new role as Transport Minister.

Claytor's First Year

AN ANALYSIS OF AMERICA'S RAIL PASSENGER SITUATION AFTER ONE YEAR OF AMTRAK'S NEW PRESIDENT'S TERM

BY WAYNE COPPLE

Reprinted with revisions from the Sep-Oct issue of MOKSRail News, newsletter of the Missouri-Kansas Rail Passenger Coalition. Wayne Copple is Chairman of MOKSRail and editor of its newsletter.

Dissatisfaction with Amtrak chief Graham Claytor seems to be growing among the ranks of rail passenger service advocates. One of the main reasons for concern is Claytor's no-growth views. Claytor has declared many times in recent months that he foresees no real growth in the Amtrak system for the next ten years.

This is particularly distressing to those who see the present system as being inadequate to provide a realistic alternate form of transportation. No doubt Amtrak must receive numerous proposals for additional service from the lunatic fringe that are unrealistic, but there have been many other proposals offered for filling some of the more obvious gaps in the system that are well thought out and backed up with detailed studies. Amtrak seems to dismiss all proposals with little more than cursory examination.

If, on the other hand, there is a project that strikes the fancy of some highly-placed Amtrak officials, the company can move with amazing speed in implementing it. In these cases all of the right numbers materialize as if by magic. The re-routing of the Chicago-San Francisco service thru Colorado and the new AUTO TRAIN service are recent examples.

In the case of the AUTO TRAIN service, Claytor said in a *Philadelphia Inquirer* interview that "We add one traina day to our existing system and there's no cost to doing that whatever; it doesn't cost us a nickel from the standpoint of our overhead." It remains a mystery why this doesn't apply to other new services over existing routes, but at the NARP Washington meeting last April Claytor claimed that adding a second frequency on an existing route simply doubled the cost.

While it is encouraging that Amtrak seems to be committed to its Northeast-Florida service, it's hard to understand how this enthusiasm can have such finite geographical limits. The Midwest-Florida market is the biggest long-haul travel corridor in the nation. Amtrak has never offered any serious competition in this market, presently offers no service at all, and refuses to consider any such service.

Claytor has a similarly myopic view of corridor-type service; it appears that the Northeast Corridor is the only one he really believes in. Amtrak continues to lavish a disproportionate amount of money and attention on the NE Corridor while offering very lackluster service in other emerging corridors. Since Claytor's arrival at Amtrak, this discriminatory policy has become more blatant with the downgrading of the Midwest short hauls by transferring Amdinette cars and 60-seat coaches to the NEC.

On the possibility of any new corridors being started, Claytor was quoted in *Passenger Train Journal* (Jul-Aug issue) as saying that the only way such service could begin would be if the states pay part of the bill under the 403(b) program. This brings up another issue that has troubled advocates —Amtrak's administration of the 403(b) program.

To say that Amtrak hasn't encouraged states to participate in this program would be a classic understatement. Amtrak usually attempts to abort any initial enthusiasm for such services by issuing ridiculously low ridership estimates. If this tactic fails and the service begins anyway, Amtrak operates it with about the same level of enthusiasm that one would expect the Southern Pacific to show if they were forced to operate a passenger train of their own.

One recent crisis that has produced a considerable amount of hard feelings between passenger train advocates and Amtrak involves a 403(b) service, the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA which operated between Sacramento, Oakland and Los Angeles. State funds for this operation ran out on Sep 30 and service ended on that date.

California Governor George Deukmejian made the SPIRIT one of his first targets for extinction under his program of fiscal aus-

terity (the highway people aren't feeling the pinch—the new governor has outlined $400 million worth of new freeway projects). The vehemently anti-passenger train Southern Pacific was one of the largest contributors to Deukmejian's campaign and most insiders feel that it is no coincidence that the governor is helping the railroad clear its tracks of the hated passenger trains.

This crisis might have been avoided had Amtrak made sincere efforts to operate the train properly and give the train decent publicity and promotion. It was known as early as last fall that the SPIRIT was in trouble, but Amtrak's Marketing Department never implemented any of the numerous suggestions for improving and promoting the service.

Amtrak's Marketing VP, Mr. Robert Gall, on several occasions pledged that the SPIRIT would be treated as a special case. This pledge was repeated at the NARP Board meeting last April when Gall said that, altho he could not disclose any specifics at the time, he was looking at a number of things to do for the SPIRIT; nothing was ever done.

NARP President John R. Martin, in an Aug 16 letter to Claytor,stated that:

"It is inconceivable that a corporation would make an investment in a service or product, such as was made in inaugurating the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA, then allow the service or product to wither without so much as a minimal effort to sustain it. We raised the issue on numerous occasions with Amtrak, encouraging various approaches. Each approach was rejected, often without any supporting rationale. A number of commitments to support the service were made by Amtrak, particularly thru Mr. Gall. We were not provided with details, only promises. Those commitments were not kept. The credibility of Amtrak's marketing function, in the eyes of NARP, has been strained for many years, a fact that I believe is well known to you. Unfulfilled commitments do little to enhance that credibility. The demise of trains without any meaningful supporting effort and with little more than negative responses to efforts to sustain their operation is tragic.

"The demise of the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA and the lack of support or fulfillment of commitments by Amtrak is even more unsettling when we note the contrasting level of support provided to the New England Metroliner service and the performance to date of that service.

"I understand that Amtrak has characterized the SPIRIT's ridership and revenue as disappointing. It is our view that both the ridership and revenue would have been materially enhanced if Amtrak had approached the operation of the train and its prospects aggressively. This was not done.

"Amtrak has stated that many route and schedule options were considered in an effort to bolster the train's revenue and ridership. Mr. Gall reported the same to us on several occasions; very little can be accomplished when matters are 'considered' but no action is taken. We expect to address Amtrak's failure to support or market the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA in our next opportunities to present testimony to the House and Senate.

"We believe that Amtrak should immediately review operation of a full federally-funded Los Angeles-Reno train (operating at least on Friday—Saturday-Sunday). The market is there—it remains essentially untapped by Amtrak. Revenues should more than cover the above-the-rails cost of such a service. Please note also that on Jun 9, 1982 Clark Tyler, in a letter to Ms. Adriana Gianturco of Caltrans, stated 'I suspect that our research will show a terrific revenue impact attributable to this extension.' "

After it became obvious that Amtrak was not likely to do anything to save the SPIRIT NARP decided to solicit funds from its members to conduct an advertising campaign for the train in cooperation with Citizens for Rail California. Altho the amount raised would seem trifling even by Amtrak standards, about $5000, it was amazing what was accomplished with the money.

Advertising was done in the print media as well as on radio. The ads were specifically designed to promote the SPIRIT, ads contained schedule and fare information, special groups such as college students and the area's large Spanish-speaking population were targeted. Ridership on the SPIRIT was up 26% in June, and July's patronage was the largest ever recorded in a single month on the train. At least part of this increase could probably be attributed to a general increase in Amtrak ridership, but there is no doubt that the ad campaign had a positive effect far in excess of what might have been expected given the modest amount available to the train's promoters. One can only guess at what could have been possible with $50,000 or so from Amtrak. It would seem a small price to pay to save a train with as much potential as the SPIRIT.

Martin pointed out the contrast between Amtrak's commitment to the NE Corridor and the equally populous West Coast. This contrast was not lost on members of CRC who pointed out that the overnight Boston-Washington NIGHT OWL is 100% federally funded and that the SPIRIT carried 47% more sleeping car passengers than the NIGHT OWL. CRC also took note of the disproportionate amount of capital improvement funds going to the NEC versus the rest of the system.

In his letter to Claytor, Martin brought up several other matters that concern the NARP membership in addition to Amtrak's handling of the SPIRIT and the failure to aggressively approach new route possibilities. Included were:

Passengers enjoy themselves on the New England Metroliner in this color photo from an elaborate brochure issued by Amtrak. The SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA never received such promotion, complained NARP President Jack Martin.

- The failure to adequately address ridership declines on the short-distance trains in the Midwest. "Little has been done to address these problems or to improve these services" said Martin.
- The manner in which the re-routing of the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR was handled. Martin said that more than one Board member had characterized Amtrak's actions as "high-handed" or "arrogant."
- No new Superliner cars for the West. Martin: "If Amtrak is to expand its service in the West, and this is clearly one of the areas of the country where growth is expected and where service expansions would appear logical, additional Superliner equipment is necessary."
- The timekeeping problems with the EAGLE. "The EAGLE is hardly a viable Chicago-St. Louis service when it operates an hour or more late the majority of the time. Opportunities for substantial additional ridership increases in this corridor are being impeded by poor schedule adherence."

Martin also made statements in behalf of daily operation of the EAGLE and SUNSET and said that the St. Louis-Carbondale extension of the MULES should be made at least in time for the opening of the New Orleans World's Fair, if not sooner, and publicized well in advance. Martin said that Amtrak should consider two separate trains on the CITY OF NEW ORLEANS route and a second section of the CRESCENT, at least between New Yorka nd Atlanta and possibly all the way to New Orleans for the summer of 1984.

Martin did credit Claytor with a number of positive accomplishments. He cited:

- Substantial improvement in meal services and the quality of the food being offered.
- The rebuilding and conversion to head-end power of dome cars.
- The rerouting of the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR, but not the handling of the situation.
- A general improvement in onboard services and fewer reports of food shortages.

Several weeks before Martin wrote his August letter to Claytor, NARP's Ross Capon solicited comments from Board members concerning Claytor's first year in office. NARP Secretary George Tyson of Baltimore had this to say:

"When Claytor was appointed, I, like many others, was elated. I saw him as 'The Man' to run Amtrak. But after meeting him in April (I was very disappointed in his negativism) and watching him in action, I think he will go down in history as one of Amtrak's worst presidents.

"His chief characteristic is lack of vision. He evidently does not realize that the railroad he is operating is so skimpy that it hardly deserves to be called a 'national' system, that it serves too few people, and that there are many gaps to be filled. Instead of having his staff searching for ways to close the gaps, he takes the attitude that others must prove to him that any train to be added will pay its own way. (I have found this to be a common attitude among transportation bureaucrats who always want someone else to do their research for them.)

"Perhaps this lack of vision explains his failure to question the myths upon which Amtrak has based its operations since its inception. Some of these myths are:

■ *All passenger trains lose money.* Claytor is well aware of the work Hamilton and Selden have done, but so far as I can tell, he has taken no real interest in it. If correct, the theories espoused by Hamilton and Selden offer the best hope of creating a truly national system *and* lessening the need for massive subsidies.

■ *The NE Corridor is the only worthwhile Amtrak operation.* Claytor seems as tied to this notion as any of his predecessors. About twice a week the Baltimore Sun papers carry huge advertisements about 'Flying to New York on the train.' Seldom is there an ad to inform us that Amtrak can take us to other places, such as Atlanta.

■ *The Marketing Department knows what it is doing.* (How could anyone fall for this turkey?)

■ The Heritage cars are worn out and not worth keeping.

■ *More bureaucrats make better trains.* Witness the new on-board trainmaster program—why not use the people already there? What happened to management's role in managing employees?

■ *Amtrak is accountable only to the Congressional committees which provide funding.* Amtrak should be held accountable to the American people who pay the bills. (NARP should be doing much more about Amtrak's accountability and I plan to write you about it later.)

"I could go on but I think I made my point—how could a man of Claytor's intelligence and integrity walk into Amtrak and accept these notions without examination? How could he fail to start asking questions and demanding answers?

"Ross suggested the D&RGW reroute as a 'plus' of Claytor's first year. It is much too early to begin hurling accolades for this—we should wait to see how patronage and revenues are affected. In addition, Claytor's arrogance in handling this matter and his adamant refusal to provide service to Wyoming tend to dim the brightness of any stars we might place in his crown for this reroute.

"I also wonder about Claytor's ability to manage. There are still far too many complaints about unruly employees and food shortages which are problems management could solve.

"I cannot agree with his policy of unmanning stations. Surely there are better ways to decrease costs. I am reminded of the saying, 'He knows the cost of everything and the value of nothing.'

"In summary, I am disappointed in Claytor and wonder if he is managing things or if the old hands at Amtrak are managing him."

Tyson's comment on Claytor's policy of closing stations is especially apropos. Amtrak has managed to draw considerable flak from the station-closing issue due to the arbitrary and biased standards used. The only criterion used by Amtrak is ticket sales per day. Amtrak makes no allowance for the fact that some stations serve only tri-weekly schedules or that many people buy tickets from local travel agents (a practice Amtrak encourages to their own detriment, since they must pay a commission on tickets sold by travel agents) or receive them by mail.

An anonymous letter from an Amtrak ticket agent, published in RTN no. 274, raised doubts about the wisdom of more closed stations. The author claimed that funds normally used for station operations are being diverted for Claytor's pet project, the on-board Train Manager/ Train Chief program. This program has been of very questionable value; most of the reports that have reached MOKSRail so far indicate that the managers and chiefs have had negligible impact on the quality of service on the trains.

There has been far too much criticism of the Claytor administration to be able to dismiss it all as the irrational ramblings of a bunch of chronic malcontents. The mood of the NARP Directors at the October Board meeting in Boston should be some indication of just how deep and how widespread is the dissatisfaction with Claytor. (A report on the Boston meeting follows—Editor.)

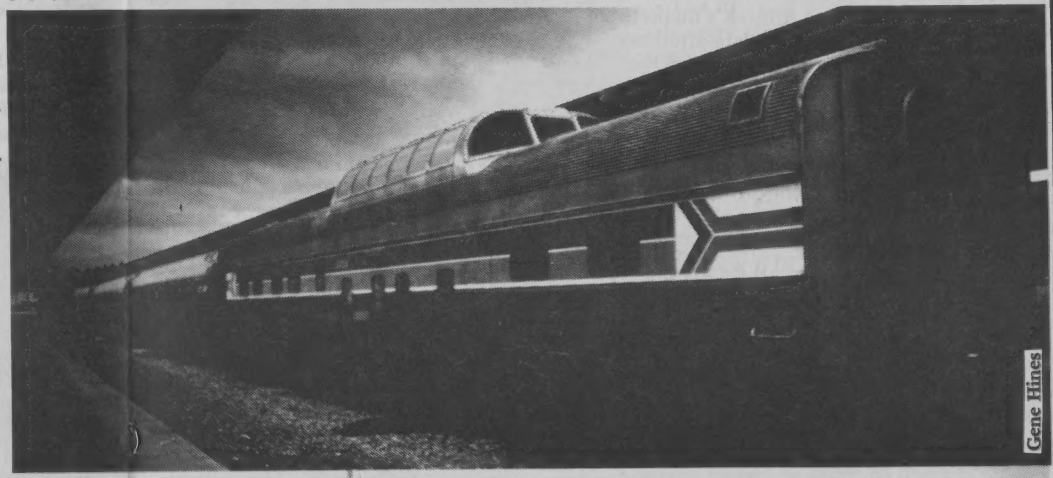
* * *

Since I wrote the preceding article in early September, there have been some encouraging developments at Amtrak. Claytor has stated that the St. Louis-Carbondale extension of the MULES should take place in April, provided the ICG and the state of Missouri are cooperative. The operation of a Kansas City-Omaha test train is a positive step toward securing much-needed direct rail service for K.C. and St. Louis to Denver and beyond. We are now also fairly confident of Amtrak service returning to Oklahoma. Amtrak examined the Newton-Ft. Worth route on June 30 and operated a test train over the BN from Kansas City to Tulsa on Oct 5.

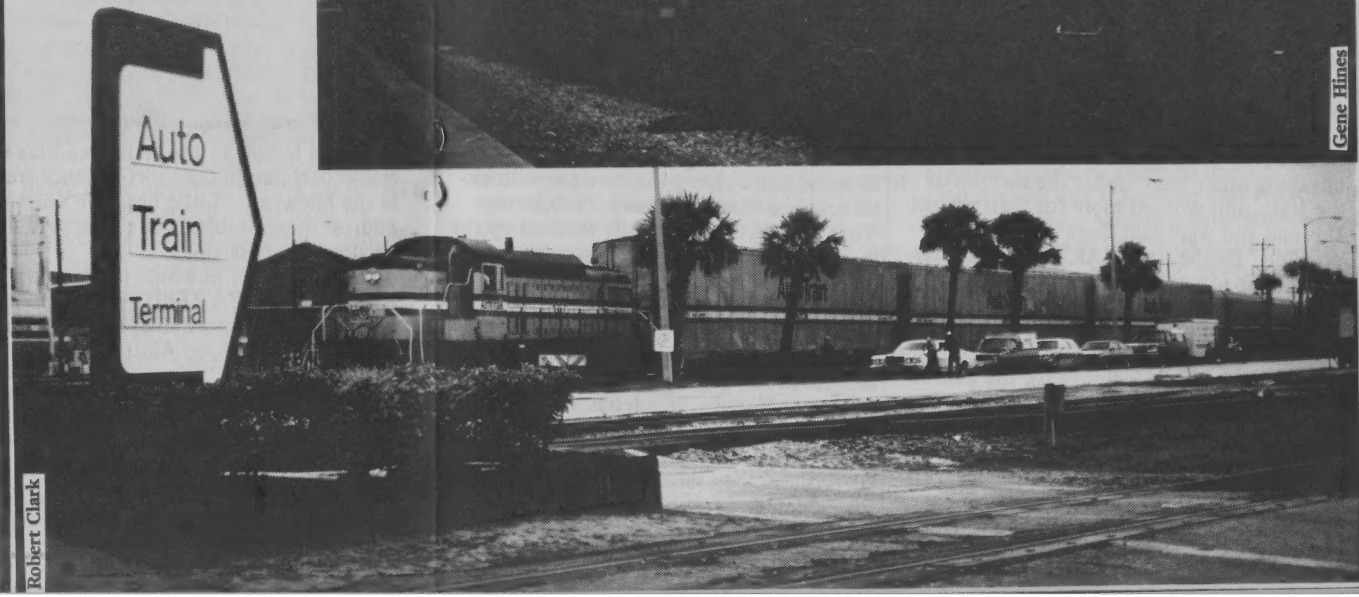
Amtrak has made an about-face on the proposed New Orleans-Mobile service and is now cooperating in the implementation of

RAIL NEWS IN PICTURES

(Right:) Last northbound SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA awaits its departure from L.A. on Sep 30 (compare with cover photo, last issue). (Below:) Auto carriers are switched by Amtrak RS3 engine 107 at Sanford FL on Oct 17 in preparation for Sanford-Lorton trial run of the AUTO TRAIN.



Gene Hines



Robert Clark

that service. It has also released genuinely optimistic ridership projections for a Raleigh-Charlotte section of the PALMETTO. Also, my last few trips on Amtrak's long distance trains seem to indicate that the Train Manager/Chief program may have begun to have a positive effect on on-board service, since Amtrak has eliminated some of the people who were just along for the ride. If we could shake up Amtrak's Marketing Department, perhaps we could really get things moving.

NARP Meets in Boston

BY PETE ROEHM

Thursday afternoon, Oct 7, the Board of Directors as well as State association heads for the National Association of RR Passengers convened at Boston's Hotel Lenox, in the Dome Room, somehow appropriate to the occasion. This would be the annual fall meeting of the NARP Board usually held in a different location each year, as the spring meeting is traditionally held in Washington.

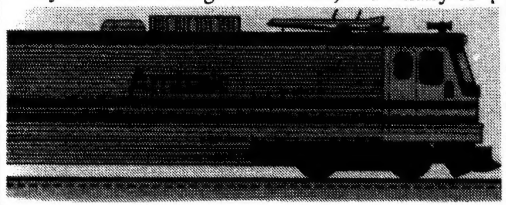
At the opening session, introductions were made and President Jack Martin commented on the debacle known as the failing of the SPIRIT as well as Amtrak's marketing and pricing policies. This late-afternoon session adjourned after two hours and the group took the MBTA's Back Bay Shuttle from "Back Bay Station" to South Station, then hoofed it to the Harvard Club for an evening reception sponsored by Directors Sam Stokes (NH) and Henry Fern (ME). We were joined by most of the staff of the Boston & Maine's Commuter Services Dept.

Friday morning at 8:30 it was back to the "Dome" for continental breakfast followed by the first session of the day with a somewhat high-spirited discussion on the demise of the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA. Apparently as early as March, Clatrans informed Amtrak that there would be no more SPIRIT soon, but Amtrak became less than spirited in its effort to notify NARP of this or to do anything other than hinder the survival of the train, and worked more for than against this end and wanted it done as quietly as possible. By the time NARP and CRC mustered their forces and began to do the promotion themselves and the patronage began to increase significantly, the decision had become non-reversible. And Amtrak refuses to assume any responsibility for the demise of the SPIRIT.

Later in the morning session, the day's first speaker appeared: Transportation Consultant Carl Englund, once of the New York Central and at that time very active in passenger service promotion and marketing. Englund expressed reservations on high-speed rail, especially with some of the data being used to hype it—e.g., that 60,000 to 100,000 would use the San Diego-Los Angeles route when, in fact, there is practically nowhere to access these future riders to the train's facilities such as parking, stations, access roads, etc. Also, are the markets there to justify such services—on certain of those routes proposed in Ohio, Pennsylvania and western New England. He talked of pricing and how with the New York Central he had responsibility for excursion trains such as those between Syracuse and New York where the revenue came in at $35 per mile versus $6.50 on the CENTURY and $2.25 on the KNICKERBOCKER. The Central was forced to drop its excursion services when state agencies and the ICC refused to let them drop real money-losing scheduled services, using the excursions as leverage in their charges against the railroad. He clearly balmed a lot of Amtrak's problems on its failure to understand pricing, giving as examples of carriers that did understand this mechanism such as People Express, PSA and Southwest Airlines. In the NE Corridor this works against Amtrak, as it handles those who can easily pay, but not the so-called "chickenbone" crowd that lines like the Pennsy always went after, and which once kept hourly trains of 15 cars and more plying the corridor with extra sections when necessary. Too,New York's airports are all easily reached by the region's population, and when low fares are there that even remain low when bus and limo fares are added on each end, then the argument for the no-frills airline gets fairly strong. Burlington VT boarded 34,000 passengers in July, and 16,000 of those went to People Express, which has just been flying in that city for a few months! And the MONTREALER suffers!

Englund then talked of rider preference for modes, and mentioned that for rail the time elapsed is about three hours and/or a distance of 400 miles, and during daylight hours. Labor costs were also brought into it, and the mention that engineers out of Grand Central easily pull down in excess of $75,000 in wages and fringes versus considerably less for the no-frills airlines; the remuneration for former Pacific Electric men on the SP was said to exceed even that figure. Clearly Amtrak was unaware of both the twin tools of pricing and marketing.

Next was the cocktail hour, followed by a buffet luncheon which could be taken back to the "Dome." The speaker for lunch was F. Colin Pease, formerly of the FRA and presently VP—Government Affairs for Guilford Transportation Industries. Pease traced the background of Tim Mellon's railroad acquisition program from the time he first attempted to acquire the ICG but ran into upper level conflicts in personalities; then to the P&LE where he was outbid by a P&LE management team; and finally to



the MEC and later the B&M, both of which are now in his camp, with the D&H expected to follow by late fall.

The D&H acquisition would allow strategic access to Buffalo and the West as well as Potomac Yard and the South. This writer then asked about the P&LE's acquisition of N&W (NKP) trackage rights into Buffalo and if this would change Mellon's thinking about securing that railroad now that it could very well be available for sale, but Pease discounted anything other than an expected congenial working arrangement on coal from Pennsylvania and West Virginia to New England over this new route; as for the BAR, he denied any interest, but few really believe him, as it has long been felt that following "Buck"Dumaine's passing Amoskeag would gladly have the Bangor & Aroostook on the market. Only Guilford or CP Rail would be the likely candidates to purchase it, since 90% of its business derives from two companies—Great Northern Paper and Fraser Paper. As for passengers, Pease, Mellon and Fink are all very positive and have been quoted on the idea of at least getting the service back to Portland (this resulted from the three of them being at the Portland Airport one day after People Express began service, and deciding that Southern Maine was indeed a viable travel market); their B&M already runs the Boston area commuter rail services which seek expansion once additional equipment is obtained.

Following Pease's speech there came a break and then a long session on the future of the NARP periodic publication, *Getting There*. It was decided to discontinue the magazine and replace it with some other publication or service less costly to the membership but still as informational or beneficial. This took up most of the balance of the afternoon, after which the crew adjourned to North Station for the cocktail train to Lowell, brought about thru the efforts of Board Member Gene Skoropowski, once of MBTA Commuter Rail and now Assistant Treasurer for Revenue Development for SEPTA, as well as the MBTA and Boston and Maine.

The two rear cars of the 5-car Boise Budd train were blocked off, and the members and guests enjoyed the "Spirit of Boston" to Lowell, where a quick turnaround took place but not before seeing the new Lowell station facility. Return to Boston sent the troops to wherever for dinner and the evening.

Saturday morning again found everyone on the "Dome" for the continental breakfast and then business at 9:00. The *Getting There* situation was more clearly established and NARP let it be known that the organization could take credit for such pending new services as St. Louis-Carbondale and New Orleans-Mobile (Jacksonville).

Jack Martin and the members felt that Amtrak should not be let off the hook for its clear dereliction of duty as regards the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA, and that some action should be taken to make it known to Amtrak and the public that NARP is less than pleased. Amtrak clearly stonewalled and deceived NARP in its actions in the SPIRIT case. This could be happening, the group was advised, on the ILLINI and the ILLINOIS ZEPHYR. Too much "Am-speak" and not enough "Amaction" would appear to be the problem.

Amtrak is also trying to get itself exempt from the Freedom of Information Act so that it would be more difficult to gain access to Amtrak's figures and other data. NARP is clearly against such a move, and asked the membership to write to stop it. Obviously, when you have to hide what

you're doing, you cannot be doing very much above board. Getting station count figures is now next to impossible, as this information is now "too hot" to handle.

In the Vice President's report, John Kirkwood reported that commissary stocking problems were still serious and that in one recent travel on 17 trains, 15 ran out of food and beverage. Claytor ducked the issue when asked about it. The Train Manager system seems to be getting better, according to Kirkwood, and there is a strong belief by NARP that under 403-b the financial share should be fifty-fifty.

Ross Capon, NARP Executive Director, talked about Paul Laxalt's (R-Nev.) attempts to get the SPIRIT extended to Reno, and that, like the CARDINAL, there could be a rebirth of the SPIRIT with an initial Reno-Oakland route as the first step to Los Angeles. Laxalt seems very interested in this, as are his constituents in the casinos on the east side of the Sierra.

Ross also discussed Amtrak's discriminatory fare policy and how it shafts the low-income travelers and Amtrak's myopic vision on revenues, precluding realistic pricing of its services; after all, all of the American people are paying for Amtrak, but not all are allowed to use it. A point was brought up regarding the pending Santa Fe-SP merger, and both Capon and Kirkwood (who knows Russell, Biaggini and Krebs) felt that the new head of both, SP's Bob Krebs, likes passenger trains as long as they cost him nothing and that the incentive contract is a good deal. There seemed to be little thought that SP would continue to be the obstacle it has been since Amtrak's inception.

Kevin Gregoire (MassARP) added a resolution that NARP support the Boston Central Artery Depression only if a connecting track between North and South Stations is included. Pete Roehm, Tony Peri, Bill Ensign, Sam Stokes and Kevin will explore this further as the engineering had already been done several years ago and the idea found most practical and feasible.

There was a break for lunch and cocktails with the speaker being Eugene Sullivan, once of the Boston & Maine and now Chief of Railroad Operations at the MBTA. Noted here, too, was that now that Boston's Bob Kiley has assumed the reins at New York's MTA and with Boston's Dave Gunn at SEPTA, the three major East Coast transit authorities are being run by Boston-trained managers. This is not to say, however, that Boston's MBTA should be regarded as the Procter & Gamble of transit agencies!

A few more points of note on Boston: Boston is clearly committed to commuter rail; in three years ridership has jumped from 8 million to 11 million with only 37 locomotives and 162 coaches and much standing room only—many rush hour trains run at 120 to 147% of their capacity. Sullivan agreed on the excellent contract that exists with the B&M and talked of the forthcoming extensions to Cape Cod, the South Shore, and Worcester once there is sufficient equipment to do so. The latter is a major problem and there is now a concerted effort to get the remaining RDCs rebuilt and/or purchase new bi-level cars.

After more business and the adjourning of the fall meeting the members went to North Station for the evening cocktail train to Rockport and back again with two of five cars blocked off and a table of sorts stretched across several seat backs to form a bar.

Thru the efforts of all, it was a most satisfactory and pleasant fall meeting. Next year's meeting will be in Kansas City, and in 1985 in Glenwood Springs.

NARP PRESSES FOR BOSTON NORTH-SOUTH RAIL LINK

The following statement was issued Oct 8 by the National Association of Railroad Passengers:

Boston—Northside commuters who work near South Station and Back Bay, and Northern New Englanders who want rail passenger service would be the principal beneficiaries if a proposal approved today by NARP's Board of Directors is implemented. The proposal would also benefit travelers from many points south and west of Boston all the way to New Yorkand Washington who want to travel to points north of Boston.

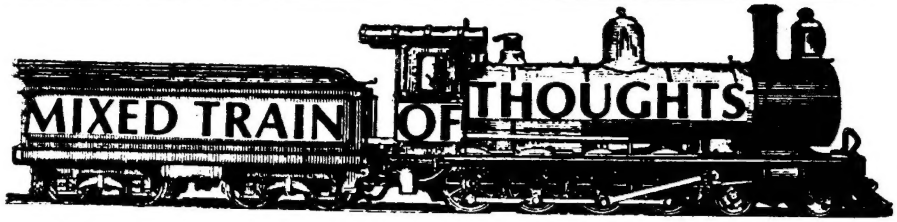
The NARP board's semi-annual meeting was held in Boston for the first time largely in recognition of the remarkable improvements in the area's commuter rail service..

The only resolution approved by the Board (one of only two resolutions considered at this meeting) states that the Board *"supports depressing Boston's Central Artery only if a North-South Station railroad connection is included."*

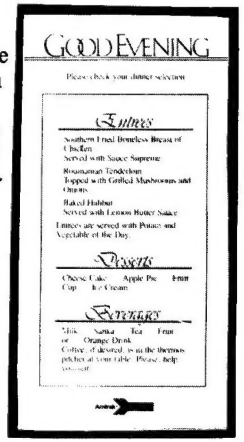
As NARP President John R. Martin noted in a Sep 2 letter to Gov. Michael Dukakis: "Commuter rail would be more useful and use less subsidy if north-side trains directly served South Station/Back Bay, south-side trains gained direct access to the maintenance facilities, and travel between various north- and south-side suburbs became easier. The connection would permit implementation of the most cost-effective rail passenger plan for New Hampshire and Maine."

Finally, as the resolution notes, the widened highway "would quickly be jammed again," whereas the rail link would be a more useful contribution to future generations.

(State and Federal politicians have so far indicated that the north-south link is a desirable plan, but are not encouraging about possible funding for it.—Ed.)



AMTRAK'S AUTO TRAIN ran a trial roundtrip leaving Lorton VA on Oct 16 at 4:45pm (15mins late) and arriving at Sanford FL about 8:15am (1¼ hours early!). Passengers were about 250 Amtrak employees and the train also carried 70 of their autos. The train headed back the same day it arrived in Florida. (AUTO TRAIN numbers are 52 and 53, and its schedule is listed on page 29 of the Oct 30 Amtrak national timetable.) Consist of the first (non-revenue) run was: P30 engines 724 and 714; cars 1613, 25123, 25124, dome 9404, 25114, dome 9407, 8701, 8600, 8700, 3123, dome 9402, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2880, 2442, 2467, 2892, 25120, 8602, 25121, 25122, 10504, and about 12 car carriers. Car 10504 is a technical training car which was along to make sure operation was smooth. Amtrak bragged that the on-board crew on the train was the "finest in the system", resourceful, hard-working, pleasant, all smiling. There were 19 on-board crew on the train. The trip was a shakedown run, of course, and one of the problems that was shaken down was a depletion of the water supply in each of the three domes and in some of the coaches. Amtrak noted that a watering will have to be performed enroute. Crew changes are made in Richmond VA, Florence, Savannah and Jacksonville, Amtrak said, so watering will have to be done at one of those stops. Otherwise the train runs nonstop between endpoints.


GOOD EVENING

Please check your dinner selection

Entrees

Southern Fried Boneless Breast of Chicken
Served with Sauce Supreme

Roumanian Tenderloin
Topped with Grilled Mushrooms and Onions

Baked Halibut
Served with Lemon Butter Sauce

Entrees are served with Potato and Vegetable of the Day.

Desserts

Cheese Cake Apple Pie Fruit Cup Ice Cream

Beverages

Milk Sanka Tea Fruit or Orange Drink
Coffee, if desired, is in the thermos pitcher at your table. Please help yourself.

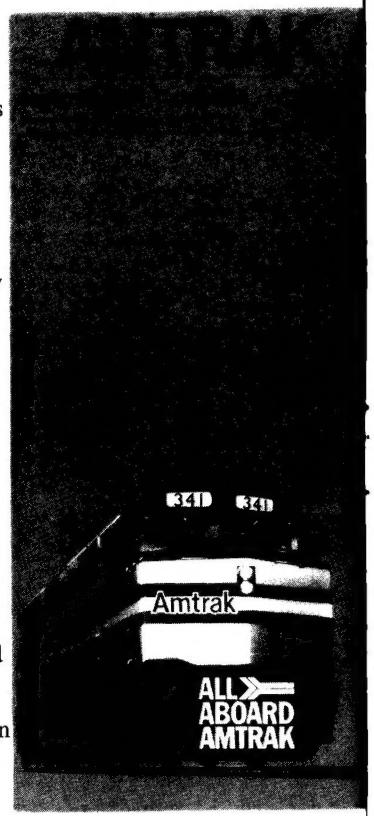
AUTO TRAIN DINNER menu is shown at the right. The menu is printed on an ivory-colored heavy-paper sheet with gold ink. Dinner entrees listed are Southern fried boneless breast of chicken served with sauce supreme; Roumanian tenderloin topped with grilled mushrooms and onions; and baked halibut served with lemon butter sauce. Dessert choices are cheese cake, apple pie, fruit cup and ice cream. Beverages are milk, Sanka, tea, and fruit or orange drink; coffee is in a thermos pitcher already placed on each table.Amtrak could not choose between buffet service or waiter service,so it tried both on the trip. Both worked well, Amtrak said, but it later decided to use the buffet service because patrons can view all the food as they are being served. At the end of the serving line are waiters who will carry the trays of food to tables if desired. The food, catered by Marriott, was called very tasty, tho not in the gourmet class. One aspect of the dining setup which tends to spoil the ambience of dinner is the use of styrofoam plates.

THE FIRST TRAIN was "immaculate" said those who saw it. Car 8600 is the table car, providing 20 tables divided into two sections (it's a former UP coach). At

each end of the table car is a large closed-circuit TV for evening movies. On either end of the table car is a buffet car (cars 8700 and 8701) which has 9 dining tables, a beverage station and a 35-foot long buffet table. There was only one lounge car on the train, car 3123, and it was reported busy and crowded. Sales at the snack car reportedly went extremely well, without too-long lines forming (however, the train was only about half-full with the Amtrak people). The domes were also found to be extremely popular places to congregate, as usual. Cars 2220, 2221 and 2222 are ex-Burlington cars in the Silver Bird series. These 11-bedroom cars were noted by more than one rider to be looking very nice. The nameplates were on the sides of the cars, but no names, only numbers. The public restrooms in the cars have been converted to small galleys, and a coffee station appears in the hallway. In coach travel, blankets and pillows are provided. Amtrak said that there was only one auto damage claim on the runs–a cracked headlight on one car. At Lorton VA, GP-9 engine 760 did the switching, while at Sanford switching was performed by an RS-3 engine (see photo on pages 12-13). Amtrak President Graham Claytor was aboard the train, and he was reported pleased with the results of the shakedown run. Some observers questioned why Amtrak made no publicity moves surrounding this trial run. Amtrak's Public Affairs Dept. said that they were test runs only, and if they had been publicized it would have been difficult to concentrate on the task of testing the train. Amtrak noted that there has been "tremendous press interest" in the train, and in fact they counted over 700 news clips in their file relating to the AUTO TRAIN. RTN did report the upcoming run last issue, and it is known that some photos of the run were taken by various photographers. RTN would be interested in hearing from anyone who has photos of the test run.....

★★★

AMTRAK'S OCTOBER TIMETABLE, effective with the Oct 30 fallback to standard time, is shown here. The cover background is bright blue. NE Corridor and Empire Service changes are analyzed in East Coast Report on page 5. The other major changes in the new schedules have mostly been given here previously. They include the inauguration of the AUTO TRAIN service, the extension of the PENNSYLVANIAN into New York City, the cutting of 45 minutes from the SUNSET LIMITED schedule, and the opening of new stations–Anaheim CA for the SAN DIEGANS (the station for Disneyland; previously Fullerton was the Disneyland stop) and New Carrollton MD, which replaces Capital Beltway MD. (Amtrak is providing transfer service between the two stations for a few days for the benefit of people who parked at Capital Beltway before the station was closed.) The CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR is re-routed on the UP between Salt Lake City and Winnemucca and now bypasses Ogden. NARP noted that there are plenty of bits of conflicting information in the new timetable, and the organization advised travelers to ignore such info. Some small errors have been pointed out by readers: For Philadelphia-Harrisburg service, the "Note" for connecting service at 30th St Station does not reflect thru service to and from NY on trains 46 and 47; the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR checked baggage station list does not reflect UP re-route, as it mistakenly lists Ogden, but not Salt Lake City; the centerfold map does not exemplify London-Port Huron thru service, and Carlin NV wasn't removed from it. The Black Dot has struck more Amtrak locations. A black dot, indicating an unmanned station, now ap-



pears after more station listings in the timetable, and these were given here in our last issue.....

THE CARDINAL USES a new station in Huntington WV, effective Oct 10. The old station was needed by the C&O for other purposes, so they built Amtrak a new station.....

NEW ORLEANS-MOBILE service startup seems almost certain for the April 24 timetable change next year. An Amtrak spokesman said that there was nothing to indicate that the project was stalled, tho Louisiana's formal commitment had not yet been received by Amtrak. The train, for the World's Fair in New Orleans, will be a special 403(b) demonstration project of five months' duration, Amtrak said–May thru September. Because of the demonstration status of the project, not all the normal capital improvements are being made yet, Amtrak said.....

★★★

THE HERITAGE DOMES currently running on the CAPITOL LIMITED and CITY OF NEW ORLEANS and soon to be running on the AUTO TRAIN all use high-back seats which restrict vision. Amtrak said that the seat backs will be lowered to alleviate this problem. The backs themselves will be reduced in height somehow without actually changing seats. Amtrak said the seats were used because they are rotateable. Twelve domes so far are involved. (Three more full-length dome lounges are under preparation for the AUTO TRAIN).....

AMTRAK'S BOARD MEETING of Oct 19 saw the approval of two commitment approval requests, for about $2 million for further Michigan track work and $2.9 million for work to the Chicago movable bridge.....

THE SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 3, struck a cattle truck at Lamar CO on Oct 26, leaving the truck driver with minor injuries, but causing no injuries aboard the train. The engine in the lead was fairly severely damaged, but the rest of the equipment received scratches and gouges.....

PORTLAND TO TROUTDALE Oregon was the route of the excursion trains run by Amtrak at the Oct 8-9 Great American Rail Roadshow in Portland.....

★★★

PROMOTING OKLAHOMA SERVICE: NARP reported that three Oklahoma Congressmen and both the state's Senators met with Amtrak's Graham Claytor in a closed-door meeting on Oct 21. The legislators emerged from the meeting with "upbeat" remarks–they were encouraged by it. Claytor was quoted as remarking that he is "bending over backward to try to find a way to serve Oklahoma." NARP said that those ways included thinking about tri-weekly service or modification of routes outside Oklahoma. Amtrak's analysis of the state should be done by the end of this year, and if service is found feasible, it would start at the April time change.....

RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL III at the Hoboken (NJ) Erie Lackawanna Terminal was held Oct 1. Ethnic food, rail and non-rail vendors and exhibits had been set up along several train platforms on the north side of the terminal. A railroad equipment display occupied several center tracks and Saturday commuter service was maintained by using tracks at the south side of the terminal. At the equipment exhibit, reports reader James Chin, NJ Transit featured its GG-1 Tuscan red engine 4877, E-60 electric 958 in NJ Transit paint scheme, E-8 4326, a GP-40P, F40PH, GE "U-boat", GP-7 and vintage and modern MU cars and stainless steel push-pull coaches. Amtrak fielded an Amfleet trainset which included a "Pine" series sleeper. There was an Amcoach with the Metroliner Service logo. American Coal Enterprises' open-end observation car "Independence" was on display. Also, a Morristown & Erie RR diesel locomotive made its appearance. The Sunday NY Times of Oct 2 featured a photo from the Festival.....

SAVING THE SAN JOAQUINS: A meeting was scheduled for Oct 27 in Fresno CA of the "San Joaquin Task Force", a quasi-governmental group organized to come up with ideas on how to get the trains' revenue/costs ratio up to the 55% criterion. An official from Caltrans pointed out that it's now "crucially important" to get ridership up on the SAN JOAQUINS. The Governor's budget will be made up in November or December, and he will have available only the ridership figures thru September, or

possibly October. (Revenue/cost ratios vary from month to month, of course, being more favorable in months of higher ridership; thus August may run about 63% while September will fall below 55% as summer patronage drops off.) Caltrans has been, in conjunction with Amtrak, offering discount fares for roundtrips on the trains. The roundtrip fare of one-way price plus $7, noted last issue, is applicable to trips between any two points on the SAN JOAQUIN route. At first, Caltrans was going for a billboard display, but they changed the promotion to a discount fare. Caltrans said that 21 billboards (presumably announcing the fares) are up in the San Joaquin Valley. The weekend of Oct 15-16 saw a jazz festival in Hanford along the SAN JOAQUIN route. The trains saw heavy ridership as a result of the festival, and a 7-car train (Amcafe, Amdinette and 5 Amcoaches), the longest regular SAN JOAQUIN yet observed, was operating; 766 passengers were counted traveling northbound the 16th, with 476 of them from Hanford.....

AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES for August, which were published last issue, included revenue figures. We naively assumed that that was the way Amtrak was publishing them now. What actually happened was that some clerk put the wrong sheets in the mail to us; we weren't supposed to get the revenue figures, and so we assume that it's not likely to happen again. One should note that the revenue figures give only ticket revenue. Added to that should be revenue from food and beverage sales, package express, etc. A Caltrans person pointed out that, for example, such miscellaneous revenue totals about 10% more than ticket income. (If every passenger on the SAN JOAQUIN bought just one extra drink, it would mean $90,000 more annual revenue for the run).....

★★★

AN AMTRAK TIMETABLE of Canadian Services, illustrated here, has been issued for the Oct 30 schedule change. The timetable includes Montreal-NY/Washington, Montreal-Albany-New York, New York-Niagara Falls-Toronto, and Chicago-Port Huron-Toronto. It's printed in both English and French.....

THE SANFORD, FLORIDA AUTO TRAIN facility has two RS3 switch engines and two extra P30 locomotives on hand.....

SAN DIEGO BULLET TRAIN is the subject of a 4-page article in the Nov issue of Popular Mechanics magazine. The cover picture also is of the proposed train, and it gives a new fantasy by the magazine's artist (shown at right) which includes a dome section just behind the cockpit.....

THE FRENCH TGV has its second anniversary this month and it celebrates it by speeding up the Paris-Lyon run to a speed of over 200 km/hr, for a trip time of just two hours. Opening the final 65-mile northern section of dedicated line allows the speedup.....

THE MOUNT RAINIER has been running enormous consists to carry passengers to and from the Seahawks games in Seattle. (See Cars & Consists, p.21.) The northbound train Oct 16 had 18 Superliner and Hi-Level cars with 3 engines; the southbound train ran 19 cars! The latter train carried about 1350 passengers.....

THE WASHINGTON ARP resolved at its meeting Oct 15 to try to challenge the law that prohibits the state from entering into 403(b) agreements with Amtrak.....

NEWS BRIEFS: Intermountain ARP's annual meeting is Nov 19 1pm at Chuckarama Restaurant, Salt Lake. Write Box 20443, SLC Utah 84120... Florida Gov. & presidential hopeful Reubin Askew campaigned from the METEOR on way to state Demo convention Oct 21... AMTRAK is demanding 5% share of any revenues the Colorado Midland Railway takes in... Northwest Calif. legislators ponder a bill to form a public agency that can negotiate takeover of the Northwestern Pacific... Overheard on a Western train out of Chicago last month—Conductor: "I'll trade eleven train chiefs for one more Superliner sleeper"...

News in this issue is updated thru October 29, 1983.

MOVING? Be sure to let RTN know your new address as soon as possible. Don't rely on the Postal Service to forward your mail to your new address!!!

What's Doing at Beech Grove

A Look at Amtrak's Repair & Maintenance Shops

Amtrak's Beech Grove facility is shown in the above aerial photograph. Conrail also owns and uses part of the facility shown. At the number one in the photo, just below the number, is a shop which, tho owned by Conrail, is now the AUTO TRAIN shop. Just to the left and above the number two are outdoor storage tracks on which D&RGW equipment is stored. The largest building in the enter of the photo is a combination of warehouses and diesel and Breta shops. Road running near bottom of photo is Emerson Avenue. For prospective visitors to the facility, the nearest hotel is about one mile to the right of the right extreme of the photo, following Emerson Avenue.

CARS & CONSISTS

*CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR, train 5, leaving Denver Oct 15: engines 236, 356, 363; cars 1257, 1219, 39911, 32034, 32037, 38023, 33007, 31006, 34009, 34074, 34014, 32032, 32006, 34072, 32056. (Train full; about 300-400 psgrs destined Glenwood Springs; last 5 cars to go to DESERT WIND and PIONEER.)

*COAST STARLIGHT, train 11, Auburn WA Oct 16: engines 372, 373; cars 1238, 39902, 31036, 34079, 33014, 38037, 32031, 32025, 34056 (deadhead? car in new wide-stripe paint job).

*MOUNT RAINIER, train 797, 1st section, Auburn WA Oct 23: engines 372, 373; cars 39944, 39949, 34015, 39959, 39940, 34019, 39945, 39948, 34009, 39950, 39942, 34023, 34081. 2nd section: one engine, number unknown; cars 39946, 31026, 39962, 39956, 34003, 34008, 34029, 34087. Total riders 1450 to 1500.

*EMPIRE BUILDER, train 8, Seattle Aug 28: engines 216, 218; cars 1223, 2903 "Pacific Bend", 39902, 34006, 34005, 38000, 32009; (added at Spokane:) 33015, 31002, 34038, 32058.

RAIL FANTRIPS

Oct 22: "Dayton Flyer" 500-mi RT Pontiac MI-Dayton OH mostly over Detroit, Toledo & Ironton. Bluewater Chap, NRHS. Info arrived too late for earlier publication.

Send large SASE when responding to listings. One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send info to: RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

EXPRESS ADS

AMTRAK–VIA RAIL CANADA–EURAIL PASS–OCEAN LINER CRUISES–RAIL TOURS–RAIL EXCURSIONS–CHARTER RAIL CARS. Arrangements by phone or appointment–use your credit card–tickets mailed promptly. A fully appointed travel agency with masters of ship and rail travel. GREAT WESTERN TOURS, Sheraton Palace Hotel, Suite 900, 639 Market Street, San Francisco CA 94105. (415) 398-2994.

DINING CAR CHINA, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, stationery, rules, metal & Pullman items, annual reports. Many railroads. Long 37¢ stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, KS 67213. Will buy items.

GISELLE'S TRAVEL CORP at 1215 4th St. Sacramento CA 95814, Phone: (916) 446-1211 offers rail tickets on AMTRAK–VIA (CANADA)–EURAILPASS along with tours and accommodations in cities to which you are traveling. Let Giselle's help you take your next memorable rail trip.

COME! Ride the railways of the world with "The International Railway Traveler." IRT is a unique, bimonthly mini-magazine which explores modern rail travel world-wide, from Spain to Siberia, Norway to New Zealand. Regular subscription is $15; $10 special, limited-time offer to NARP and Transport 2000 members. Sample copy $2.50. Write IRT, Dept R, P.O. Box 35067, Louisville, KY 40232. (502) 456-1028.

ATTENTION PASSENGER TRAIN FANS: Available now, "Dining on Rails", the complete book on dining car china showing 580 patterns and over 900 photos. Book includes many passenger train ads, recipes, train photos and illustrated with the best of passenger train artwork. You don't need to be a china collector to enjoy "Dining on Rails." Available for Christmas; order today. Send check or money order for $43.95 postpaid. RK Publishing, 3875 Eaton St., Denver CO 80212.

GUIDE BOOKS in time for Christmas. Scenic Rail Guide to Central and Atlantic Canada by Bill Coo and Scenic Rail Guide to Western Canada by Bill Coo and America by Train by Ira Fistell are available postpaid at $8.95 for one, $7.95 each for two or more. California residents please add 6% sales tax. Let's Travel Tours, P O Box 2768, Riverside CA 92516.

WHAT IS the AMTRAK board's legal authority for their refusal to comply with the audit, account & obligation provisions of secs. 9105 to 9108, title 31, UNITED STATES CODE?

WHAT IS the purpose of the AMTRAK board of directors denying that AMTRAK is a "Government controlled corporation" as defined in sec. 103, title 5, UNITED STATES CODE?

"Issues in American Rail Travel", RTN's little book on important problems with America's rail passenger revival, is almost ready for publication. Price will be $4.50, which includes relevant tax & postage. Full details will be given later in RTN. PO Box 9007, Berkeley 94709.

RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads cost just $1.00 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads are only $1.25 per square inch. RTN, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

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QUOTES OF THE WEEK ***

"It has been the policy of Amtrak to attempt to *dictate* to Congress what should be included and what should not be included in the bill. While I agree Amtrak has a mandate from Congress to improve its service and decrease its dependence on Federal funds, I do not believe Congress abdicated its authority and responsibility to Amtrak to make all decisions on how this is to be done."

–Congressman Michael Bilirakis (R-Fla) during debate on H.R. 3648 "Amtrak Improvement Act of 1983," Oct. 6, in Congressional Record.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB ***

"The streetcar, which was first pulled by horses and then propelled by electricity, was America's first major form of mass transportation. It is recalled by a nostalgic block of four commemoratives (stamps) that spans more than a century, from the early horsecar on tracks to the sole trolley line still operating in America today."

–Samuel A. Tower in New York Times, Sep 25.

(Don't try to tell them that in Boston, Philadelphia, San Francisco, etc., etc.)

"The first (AUTO TRAIN) menu provided by them includes the choice of three dinner entrees: beer, Southern fried chicken, and halibut."

–Rail Travel News, issue 277, page 17.

(To accommodate those who will drink all the way to Florida.)

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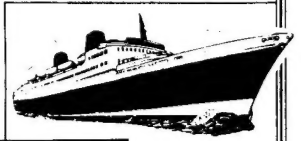

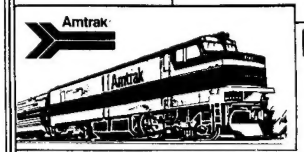

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